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AUTHOR Kaufmann, Paul J.; Netusil, Anton J.
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ABSTRACT

Improving student satisfaction with academic advising has been the focus of university efforts in recent years. The academic advising conference between adviser and advisee normally occurs in a dyadic setting; thus, as with counseling, it seemed plausible to the authors that the interpersonal relationship between the adviser and student is important in developing a satisfying exchange. This document reports on a study which sought to train advisers to operationalize different counseling behaviors. Three advisers were trained to use attending behavior/no attending behavior, and self-disclosure/no self-disclosure to 60 subjects. Each student was randomly assigned to one of the four experimental manipulations. Significant main effects on the various variables in the experiment provided support that attending behavior and self-disclosure help strengthen the adviser-advisee relationship. Suggestions for future studies are reviewed. (Author/PC)

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Selected communication variables and their effect upon advisee satisfaction with adviser-advisee conferences

Paul J. Kaufmann

Anton J. Netusil

Iowa State University

Ames, Iowa

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Improving student satisfaction with academic advising has been the focus of university efforts in recent years. University-wide academic advising committees as well as university sanctioned investigations into the matter of advising evidence this concern (22). Beyond these efforts there have been limited attempts to isolate specific adviser communication competencies that might posssibly strengthen the relationship between the adviser and the advisee.

The academic advising conference between adviser and advisee normally transpires in a dyadic setting resembling a counseling session. Thus, as with counseling and therapy, it seemed plausible that the interpersonal relationship between the adviser and the advisee is important in developing a satisfying exchange. Factors affecting this relationship have been discussed by a number of writers in communicology, psychology, education, and sociology.

In the therapeutic dyadic setting Carkhuff (2), Rogers (26), and Snyder (28), underscore the need for the therapist's positive regard for the client. Gardner (6, p. 431) in reviewing literature aimed at the counselor-client relationship concluded that the quality of the relationship is directly correlated with therapeutic change. This writer reasoned that the logical link between therapeutic change and client satisfaction is apparent with the assumption that the client, having changed, has more direct access to his desired

goals, and consequently is more satisfied.

There are a number of variables that influence the relationship in a dyadic conference, and one of these is the personal attractiveness of the interviewer. Heider's (11) balance theory emphasized the significance of this attractiveness in dealing with efforts to influence behavior. Moreover, Strong and Dixon (29) and Strong and Schmidt (30 and 31) found a connection between the amount of influence and interpersonal attractiveness.

In summary, the preceding discussion followed this line of reasoning: advisee satisfaction in the dyadic setting is in part dependent on the adviser-advisee relationship, and this relationship is successfully formed by positive regard and interpersonal attractiveness. The final step was to locate communication variables that might influence positive regard and interpersonal attractiveness and which would ultimately increase advisee satisfaction. Research suggested that two such communication variables are attending behavior and self-disclosure.

Literature focusing on these two variables indicated they act as potent forces in the dyadic conference. Attending behavior, as described by Allen Ivey in his book Microcounseling: innovations in interviewing training, involves relaxed attentive posture, eye contact, and verbal following. Ivey asserted that attending behavior is a potent

reinforcer and "an important aspect of establishing a relationship with the client" (12, p. 37). In his discussion of attention Ivey provided a systematic and thorough synthesis of literature. He justified his claim that attention is crucial in a relationship by demonstrating that attention reinforces desired behavior, and by pointing out that verbal and non-verbal attention patterns change human behavior.

A second communication variable which boasts some impact on the dyadic relationship is self-disclosure. Self-disclosure is defined as communication in which a speaker deliberately makes himself known to another. The knowledge offered by the speaker usually is not obtainable from another source. The following studies implicate self-disclosure as having a positive influence on the relationship between individuals. Gibb (8) noted that "supportive" communication demands self-disclosure, and Matson and Montagu (21) and Johannesen (13) concluded that in-depth communication ("dialogue") likewise requires self-disclosure. Connections between friendship and self-disclosure were explored by Pearce,et al. (25). They found that mutual self-disclosure is a requirement of friendship evolution. Finally, Wernimont (33) determined that counselor self-disclosure similar to the views and feelings of the client increased personal attractiveness significantly more than counselor self-disclosure which went counter to the views and feelings of

the client.

Using the above framework as a guide, this investigation was initiated to answer the following questions:

1) Is it feasible to train advisers through "microadvising," a technique similar to microcounseling (12)?

2) Do principles known to operate in the therapeutic setting operate in the adviser-advisee setting?

3) Is advisee satisfaction related to attending behavior?

4) Is advisee satisfaction related to self-disclosure similar to the advisee?

5) Does interaction occur between attending behavior and self-disclosure (similar)?

As an outgrowth of these questions, three null hypotheses were generated:

1) Adviser attending behavior does not affect advisee satisfaction.

2) Adviser self-disclosure similar to the views and feelings of the advisee does not affect advisee satisfaction.

3) Adviser attending behavior does not interact with adviser self-disclosure similar to the advisee.

Method

Using a method similar to microcounseling (12) three advisers were trained to operationalize attending behavior, no attending behavior, and self-disclosure (similar), no self-disclosure (similar). Sixty subjects were randomly selected from a pool of seven-hundred students, and each was randomly assigned to one of the experimental conditions. Each subject was then interviewed for approximately twenty-five minutes by one of the three advisers. Within these interviews the subject was given one of four experimental manipulations:

1) No attending, no self-disclosure (similar).
2) No attending, self-disclosure (similar).
3) Attending, no self-disclosure (similar).
4) Attending, self-disclosure (similar).

To maintain continuity within the interviews, the Adviser Script was developed for this study. Following the interview the subject responded to a posttest instrument which contained manipulation checks and dependent measures. Analysis of variance appropriate for a 3X2X2 full factorial design was employed on the data which were transformed to satisfy model assumptions. The general hypotheses and results are summarized in Tables 5 and 6.

Results and Discussion

Manipulation checks. The posttest contained three manipulation checks designed to tap advisee perceptions of the experimental manipulations. Similarity was included as a check for the self-disclosure (similar) conditions only; however, it revealed main effects for the attending behavior conditions as well (see Table 1). Attentiveness, which was included as a perception check for attending behavior manipulations, produced significant main effects for the self-disclosure (similar) manipulations also (see Table 2). Apparently these checks either lacked sufficient sensitivity to distinguish between attending behavior and self-disclosure (similar), or the subjects were unable to distinguish differences between these conditions.

The check for number of self-disclosures revealed significant differences between advisers. This indicated that the three advisers were not perceived as giving the same number of self-disclosures, despite their having done so; however, the highly significant main effects for self-disclosures only, suggested that each adviser was self-disclosing sufficiently to operationalize the treatment. The significant interaction between attending behavior and self-disclosure (similar) was magnitudinal and could indicate that attending behavior is perceived by the subjects as an expression of similarity (see Table 3).

Dependent measures. Sixteen of the thirty-one dependent measures revealed no significant interactions, and consequently can be subjected to direct interpretation. Of special interest was the measure which tapped the advisees' willingness to return to the adviser and the amount of time the advisee would want to spend in a follow-up interview. Main effects for attending behavior and self-disclosure (similar) were significant on this measure, thus indicating that these communication behaviors increase an advisee's desire to further the relationship with the interviewing adviser (see Table 4). Significant main effects on other variables provided additional support that attending behavior and self-disclosure (similar) firm the adviser-advisee relationship (see Tables 5 and 6).

Main effects on the fifteen dependent measures which revealed significant interactions were interpreted with caution. However, since the interactions were magnitudinal, they were less difficult to interpret than variables returning directional interactions. None of the variables in this investigation revealed severe directional interaction. Plots of the means indicate that these magnitudianl interactions were largely due to adviser differences (see Appendix A). In addition to these individual adviser differences, which were not intended to be removed from the treatments, in some cases the advisers may have been giving maximum rather than optimum

treatments. This maximization could cause a variable mean to start at a lower point in the no attending, no self-disclosure (similar) treatment, leaving that adviser with relatively greater potential to raise his mean score across the other treatments, causing a substantial magnitudinal interaction.

Significant adviser main effects were found on the dependent measures strong/weak, mature/immature, deep/shallow, and decisive/indecisive. Adviser differences were not anticipated on any of the dependent measures, and the researcher can only conjecture as to the causes. Three possible explanations are offered. First these variables may be highly sensitive to a wide range of adviser characteristics as well as the experimental manipulations. Second, the variables may carry diverse or unclear impressions for the subjects to interpret. Third, the microadvising training may not be able to train out characteristics which influence these variables.

Strengths and limitations

Strengths. Strengths of this investigation were:

1) The random nature of the sample which made the results generalizable to the sample population.

2) The natural adviser-advisee interview environment which minimized artificiality and masked the experimental manipulations.

3) The microadvising training program which assured operationalization and consistency of the experimental conditions.

Limitations. Some limitations were apparent in this investigation:

1) The posttest was lengthy and contained some items which were apparently not understood by the subjects.

2) The advisers were possibly above the university average in expertise and did not represent the actual range of advisers.

3) The inclusion of a female adviser may have introduced sex difference variables which the study did not intend to tap. (However, no significant F values were revealed for male and female subjects) (see Table 7).

4) The subjects were mainly freshmen and sophomores from one college in the university.

Suggestions for Future Study

To deal with some of the limitations the following suggestions are offered:

1) The posttest should be read by a number of raters to judge item clarity.

2) Posttest responses should be factor analyzed, and if necessary items modified or replaced.

3) A wider range of advisers and students should be used to increase generalizability to a wider range of ages, curricula, colleges, and so on.

4) Adviser sex differences should be investigated in relation to advisee satisfaction.

5) All sessions should be video tape recorded so that the adviser's and advisee's non-verbal behavior could be analyzed.

6) More communication variables should be explored as possible indicators of advisee satisfaction.

Table 1

Analysis of Variance: Similar

Source	df	SS	MS	F
A Advisers	2	2918.233	1459.117	0.27710
B Attending	1	118281.600	118281.600	22.6258**
C Self-disclosure	1	156468.267	156468.267	29.71452**
A*B	2	9684.700	4842.350	0.91960
A*C	2	2370.233	1185.117	0.22506
B*C	1	8166.667	8166.667	1.55091
A*B*C	2	16375.633	8187.817	1.55493
Residual	48	252754.400	5265.717	

*P<.05

**P<.01

Table 2

Analysis of Variance: Attentiveness

Source	df	SS	MS	F
A Advisers	2	17247.600	8623.800	1.19497
B Attending	1	332717.067	332717.067	46.10350**
C Self-disclosure	1	37600.067	37600.067	5.21012*
A*B	2	30496.133	15248.267	2.11290
A*C	2	5834.133	2917.067	0.40421
B*C	1	23840.267	23840.267	3.30347
A*B*C	2	1948.133	974.067	0.13497
Residual	48	346403.600	7216.742	

*P<.05

**P<.01

Table 3

Analysis of Variance: Number of Self-disclosures

Source	df	SS	MS	F
A Advisers	2	22.300	11.150	3.79037*
B Attending	1	0.417	0.417	0.415
C Self-disclosure	1	322.017	322.017	109.46742**
A*B	2	5.633	2.817	0.95751
A*C	2	0.633	0.317	0.10765
B*C	1	20.417	20.417	6.94051**
A*B*C	2	12.633	6.317	2.147
Residual	48	141.200	2.942	

*P<.05

**P<.01

Table 4

Analysis of Variance: Willing to Return

Source	df	SS	MS	F
A Advisers	2	367.500	183.750	0.37028
B Attending	1	1815.000	1815.000	3.65743*
C Selfdisclosure	1	1926.667	1926.667	3.88245*
A*B	2	1447.500	723.750	1.45844
A*C	2	15.833	7.917	0.01595
B*C	1	60.000	60.000	0.12091
A*B*C	2	422.500	211.250	0.42569
Residual	48	23820.000	496.250	

*P<.05

**P<.01

Table 5

HYPOTHESIS 1: ADVISER ATTENDING BEHAVIOR DOES NOT AFFECT ADVISEE SATISFACTION. "REJECT" INDICATES A SIGNIFICANT MAIN EFFECT; "ACCEPT" IS USED IN THE STATISTICAL SENSE MEANING FAILURE TO REJECT THE NULL HYPOTHESIS, OR NO MAIN EFFECT FOR ATTENDING BEHAVIOR.

Summary Table for Hypothesis 1

Variable	F	Conclusion
Warmth*	123.89478	Reject
Understanding*	77.88654	Reject
Positiveness*	38.75164	Reject
Friendliness*	93.51996	Reject
Concern*	77.64823	Reject
Willing to return	0.37028	Reject
Strong/weak	9.72374	Reject
Skillful/clumsy	5.55859	Reject
Meaningful/not meaningful	17.55755	Reject
Helpful/unhelpful	30.42194	Reject
Friendly/hostile	63.84964	Reject
Realistic/unrealistic	10.63081	Reject
Nice/awful	68.28883	Reject
Competent/incompetent	9.64036	Reject
Socially adept/socially inept	4.23922	Reject
Secure/insecure	12.62225	Reject
Industrious/lazy	24.13407	Reject
Social/anti-social	41.86921	Reject
Mature/immature	0.83394	Accept
Clear/confusing	3.25816	Accept
Efficient/inefficient	2.58015	Accept
Active/passive*	40.11951	Reject
Conscientious/indifferent*	63.17723	Reject
Attentive/inattentive*	47.10936	Reject
Deep/shallow*	16.41504	Reject
Sympathetic/unsympathetic*	66.11190	Reject
Close/distant*	84.91873	Reject
Decisive/indecisive*	10.17714	Reject
Pleasant/irritable*	56.14259	Reject
Stable/erratic*	0.45411	Accept
Consistent/inconsistent*	7.84418	Reject

*=significant interaction

Table 6

HYPOTHESIS 2: ADVISER SELF-DISCLOSURE (SIMILAR) DOES NOT AFFECT ADVISEE SATISFACTION. "REJECT" INDICATES A SIGNIFICANT MAIN EFFECT; "ACCEPT" IS USED IN THE STATISTICAL SENSE MEANING FAILURE TO REJECT THE NULL HYPOTHESIS, OR NO MAIN EFFECT FOR SELF-DISCLOSURE (SIMILAR).

Summary Table for Hypothesis 2

Variable	F	Conclusion
Warmth*	10.80014	Reject
Understanding*	51.13356	Reject
Positiveness*	9.53594	Reject
Friendliness*	18.93546	Reject
Concern*	21.35429	Reject
Willing to return	3.08245	Reject
Strong/weak	4.48538	Reject
Skillful/clumsy	4.03874	Reject
Meaningful/not meaningful	4.02548	Reject
Helpful/unhelpful	4.69850	Reject
Friendly/hostile	4.16266	Reject
Realistic/unrealistic	6.01975	Reject
Nice/awful	6.18654	Reject
Competent/incompetent	2.87267	Accept
Socially adept/socially inept	1.23393	Accept
Secure/insecure	1.43444	Accept
Industrious/lazy	2.04349	Accept
Social/anti-social	3.12592	Accept
Mature/immature	2.16134	Accept
Clear/confusing	0.45383	Accept
Efficient/inefficient	0.20350	Accept
Active/passive*	3.96320	Reject
Conscientious/indifferent*	27.59003	Reject
Attentive/inattentive*	8.57065	Reject
Deep/shallow*	9.58016	Reject
Sympathetic/unsympathetic*	22.87104	Reject
Close/distant*	15.44076	Reject
Decisive/indecisive*	4.43621	Reject
Pleasant/irritable*	8.49370	Reject
Stable/erratic*	0.43935	Accept
Consistent/inconsistent*	0.21625	Accept

*=significant interaction

Table 7

Analysis of Variance: Sex

Source	df	SS	MS	F
A Advisers	2	0.433	0.216	0.83871
B Attending	1	0.016	0.016	0.06452
C Self-disclosure	1	0.150	0.150	0.58065
A*B	2	0.033	0.017	0.06452
A*C	2	0.700	0.350	1.35484
B*C	1	0.817	0.817	3.16129
A*B*C	2	0.433	0.217	0.83871
Residual	48	12.400	0.258	

*P<.05

**P<.01

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APPENDIX A

PLOTS OF MEASURES YIELDING INTERACTIONS

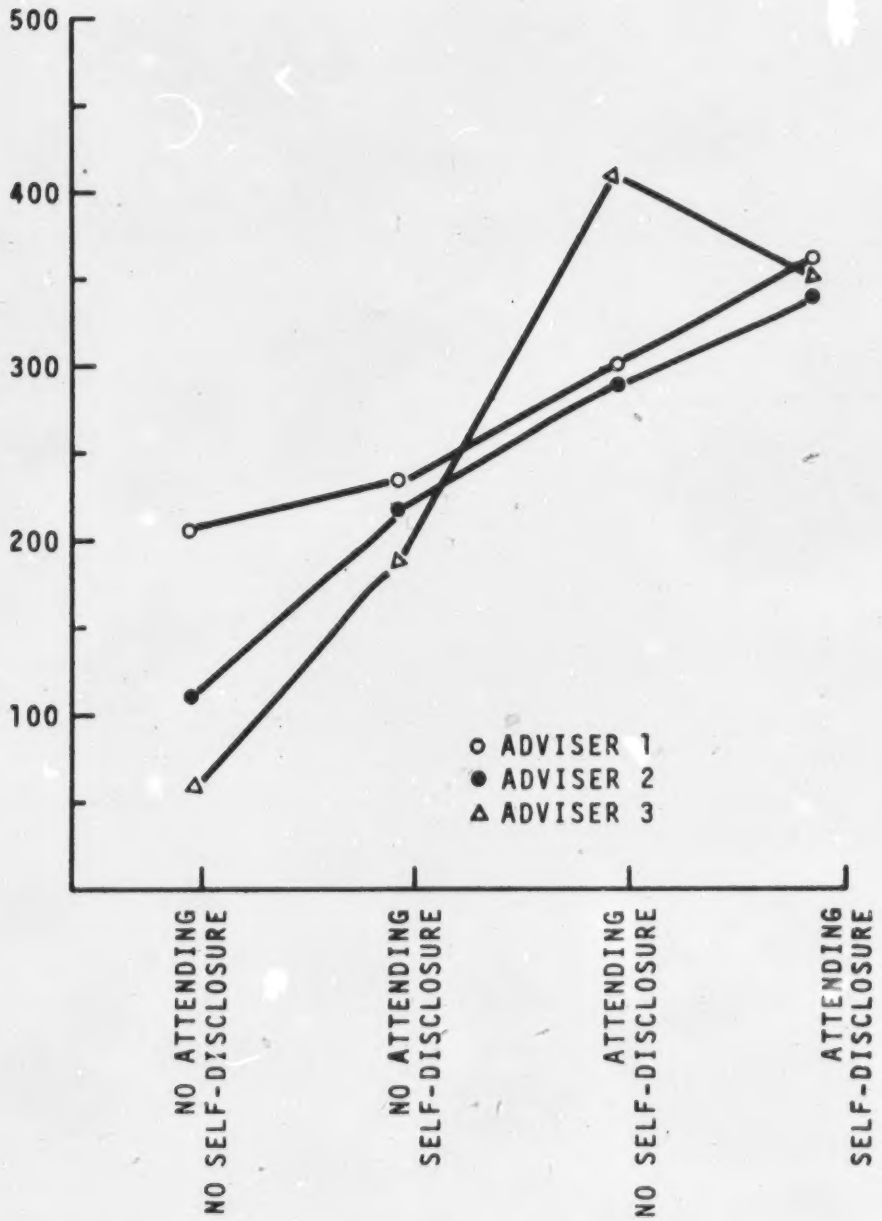

Figure 4. Plotted means: Warmth

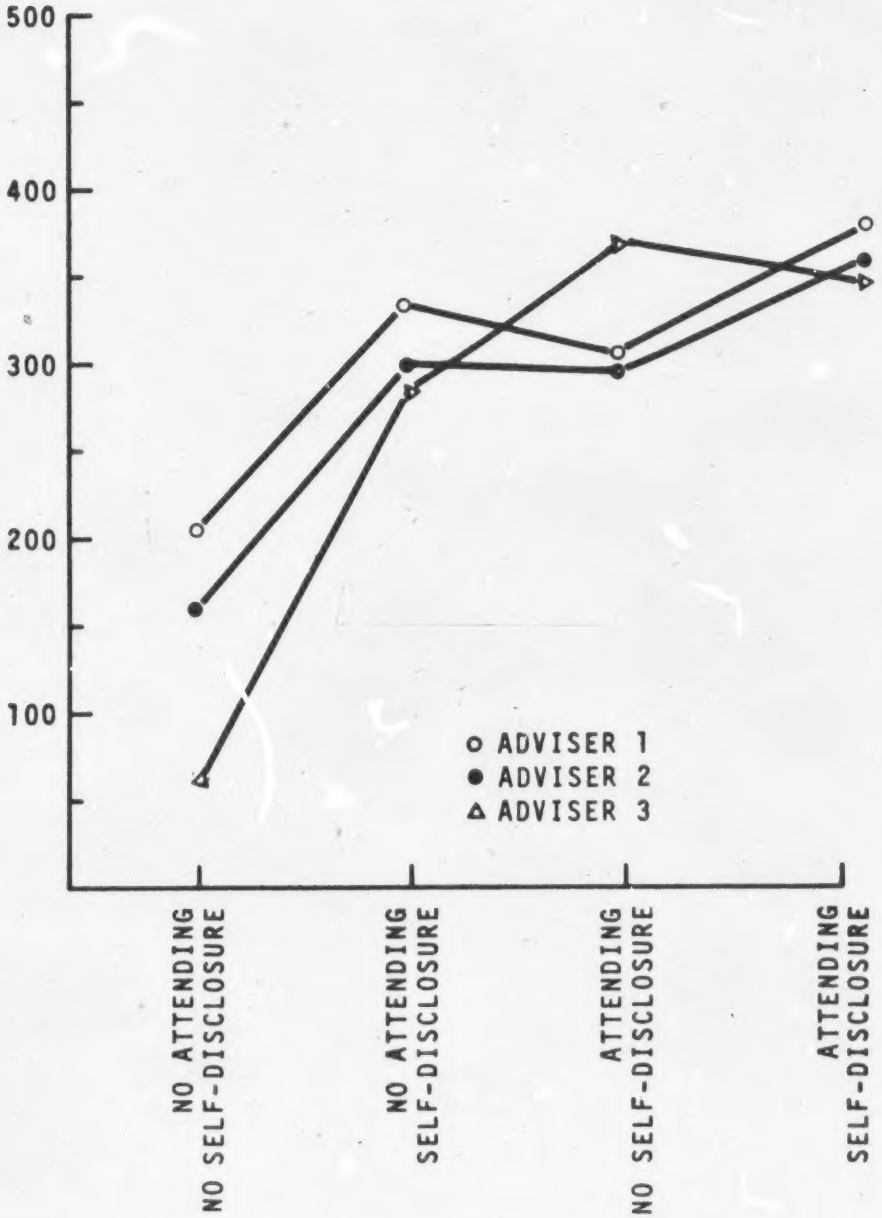

Figure 5. Plotted means: Understanding

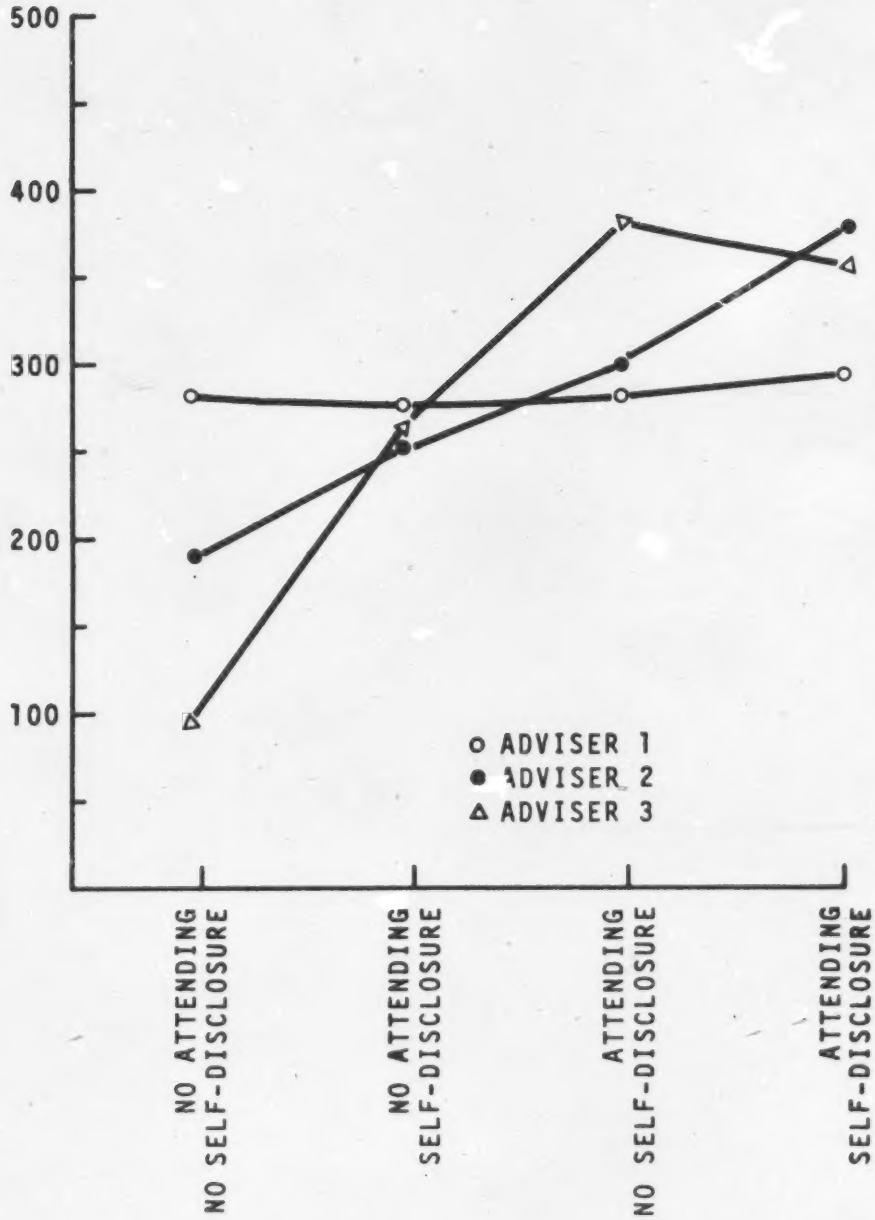

Figure 6. Plotted means: Positiveness

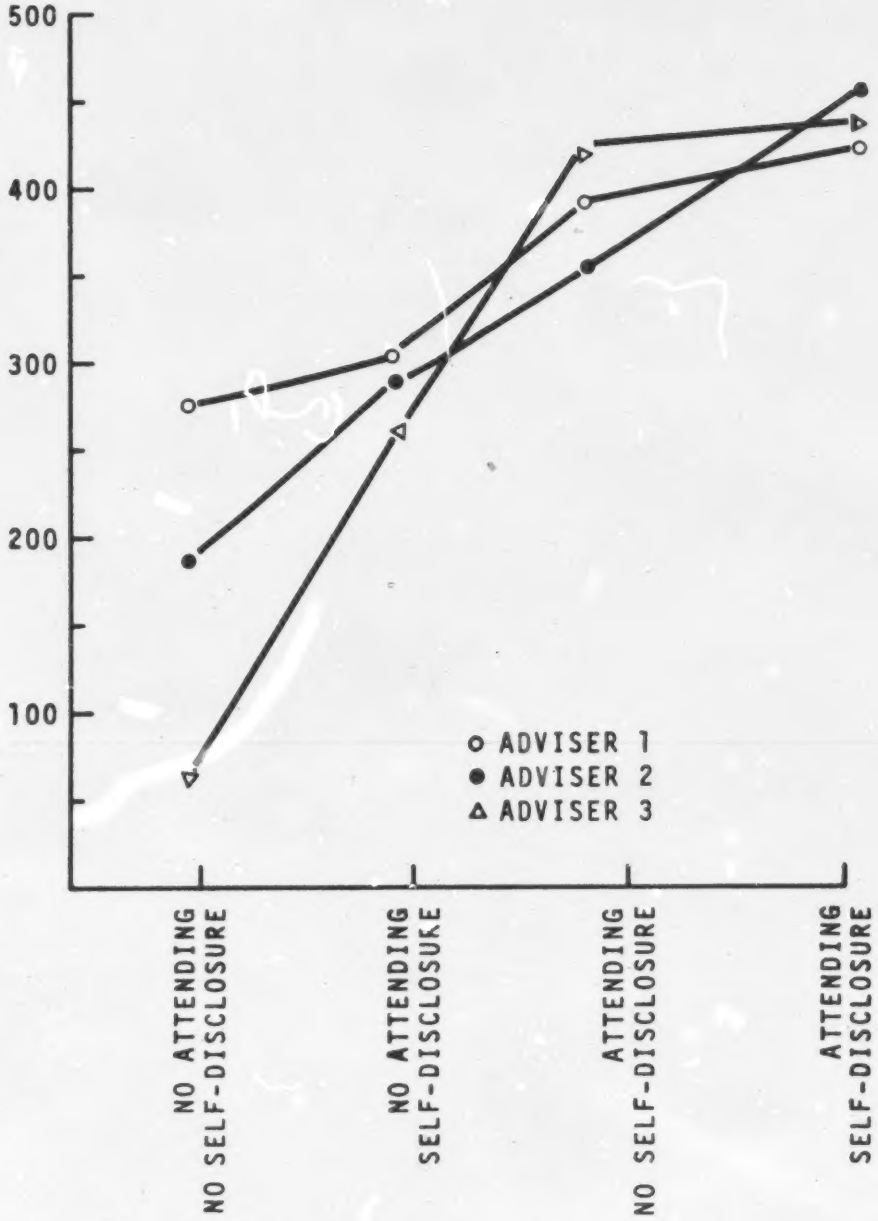

Figure 7. Plotted means: Friendliness

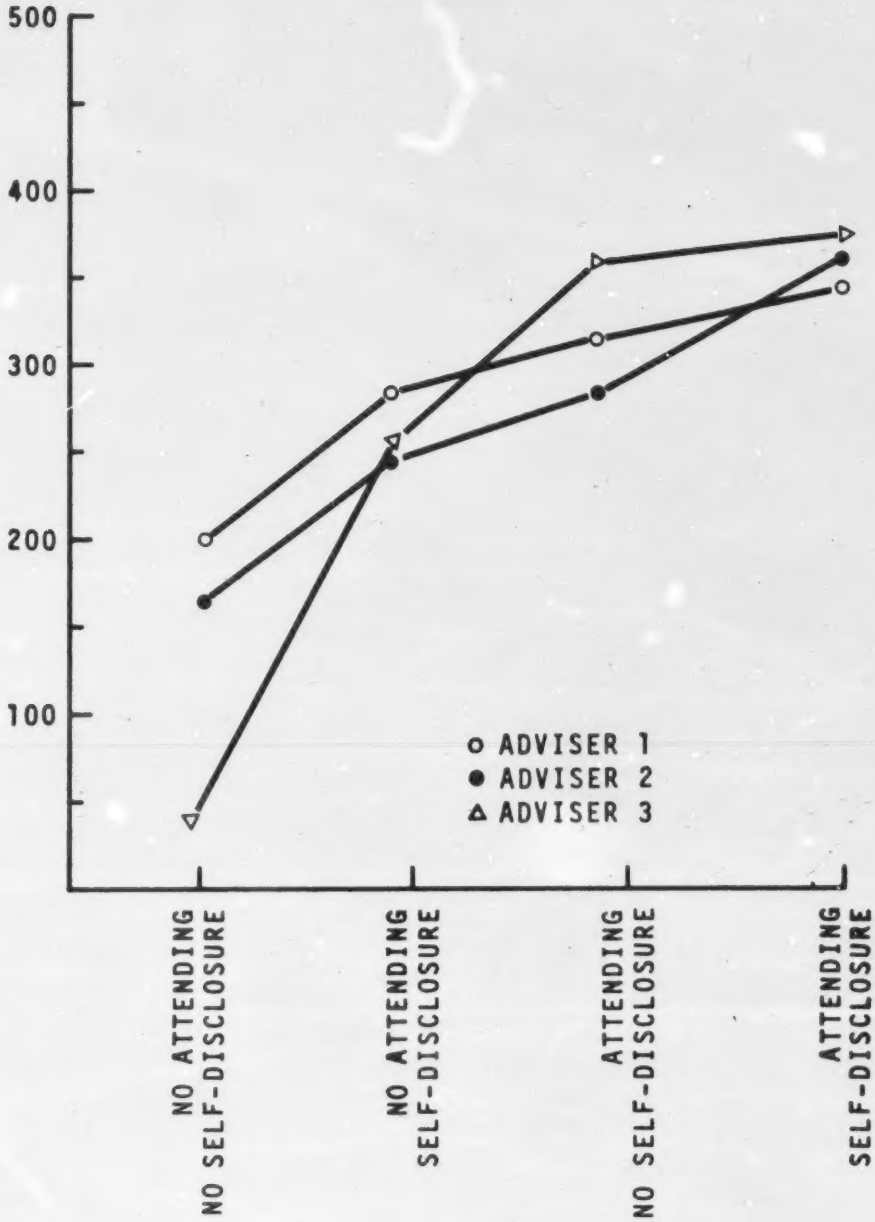

Figure 8. Plotted means: Concern

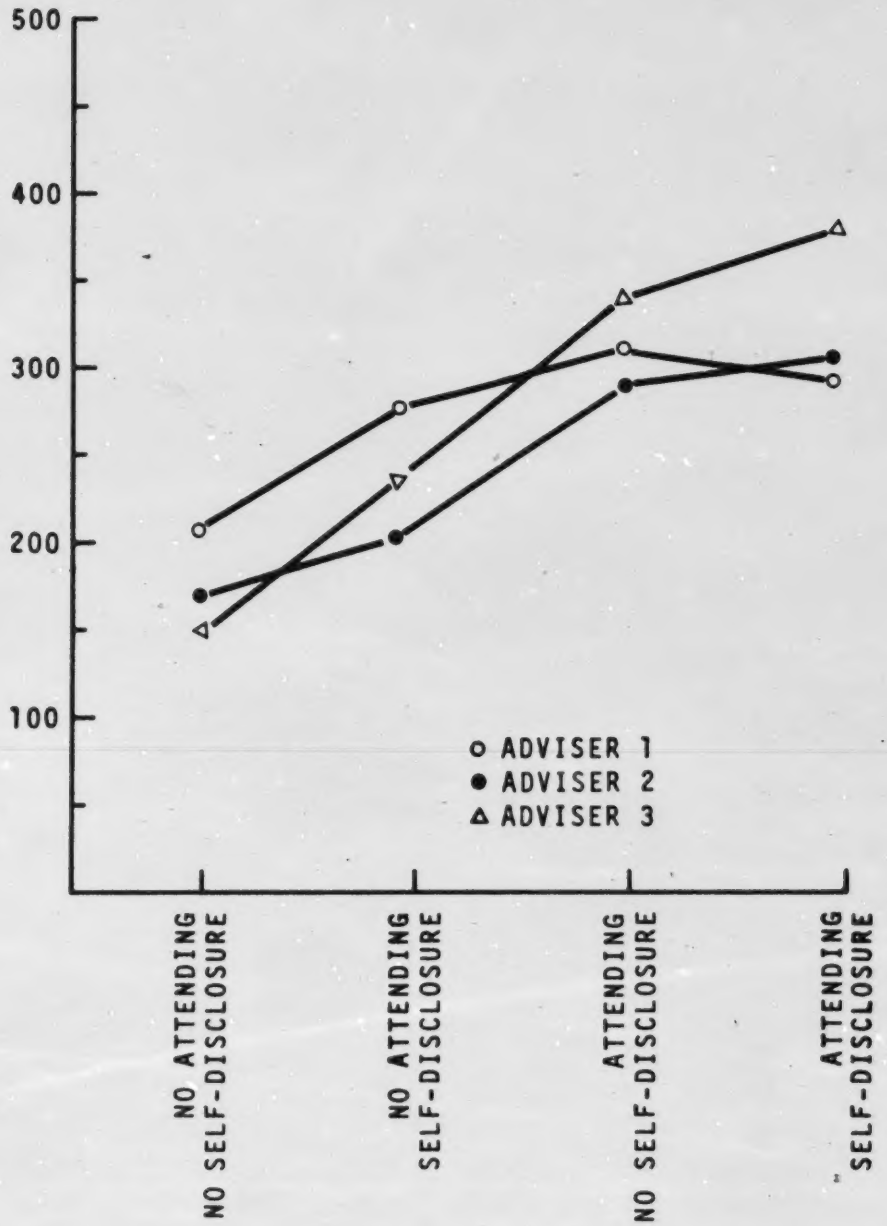

Figure 25. Plotted means: Active/passive

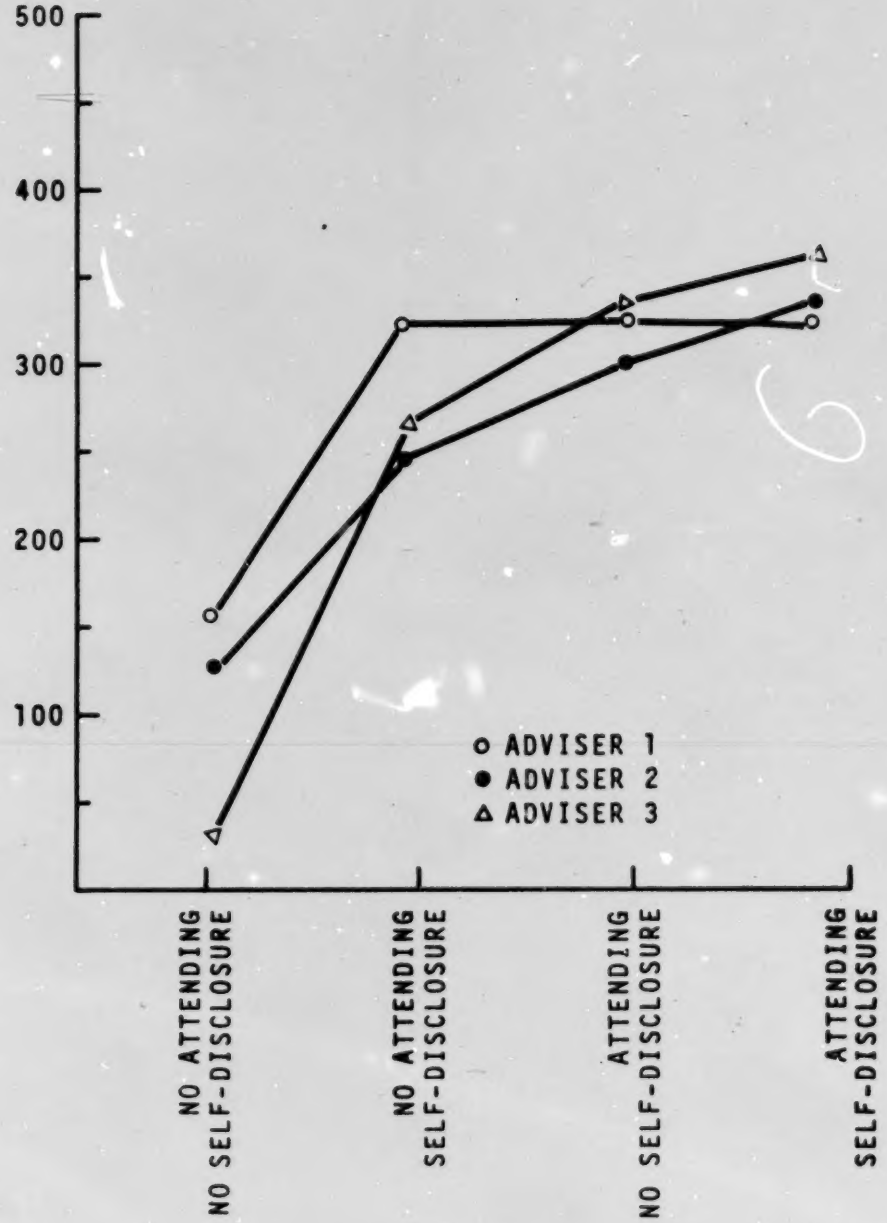

Figure 26. Plotted means: Conscientious/indifferent

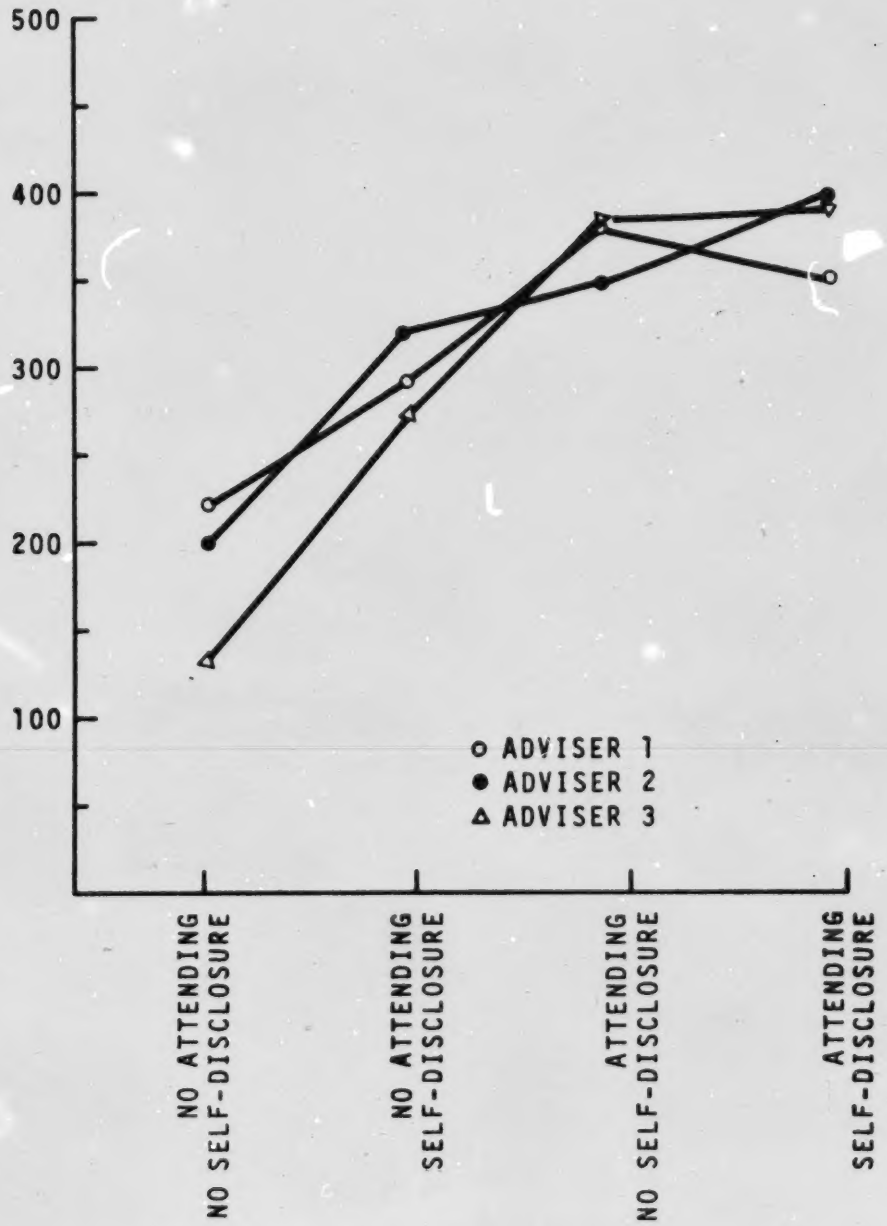

Figure 27. Plotted means: Attentive/inattentive

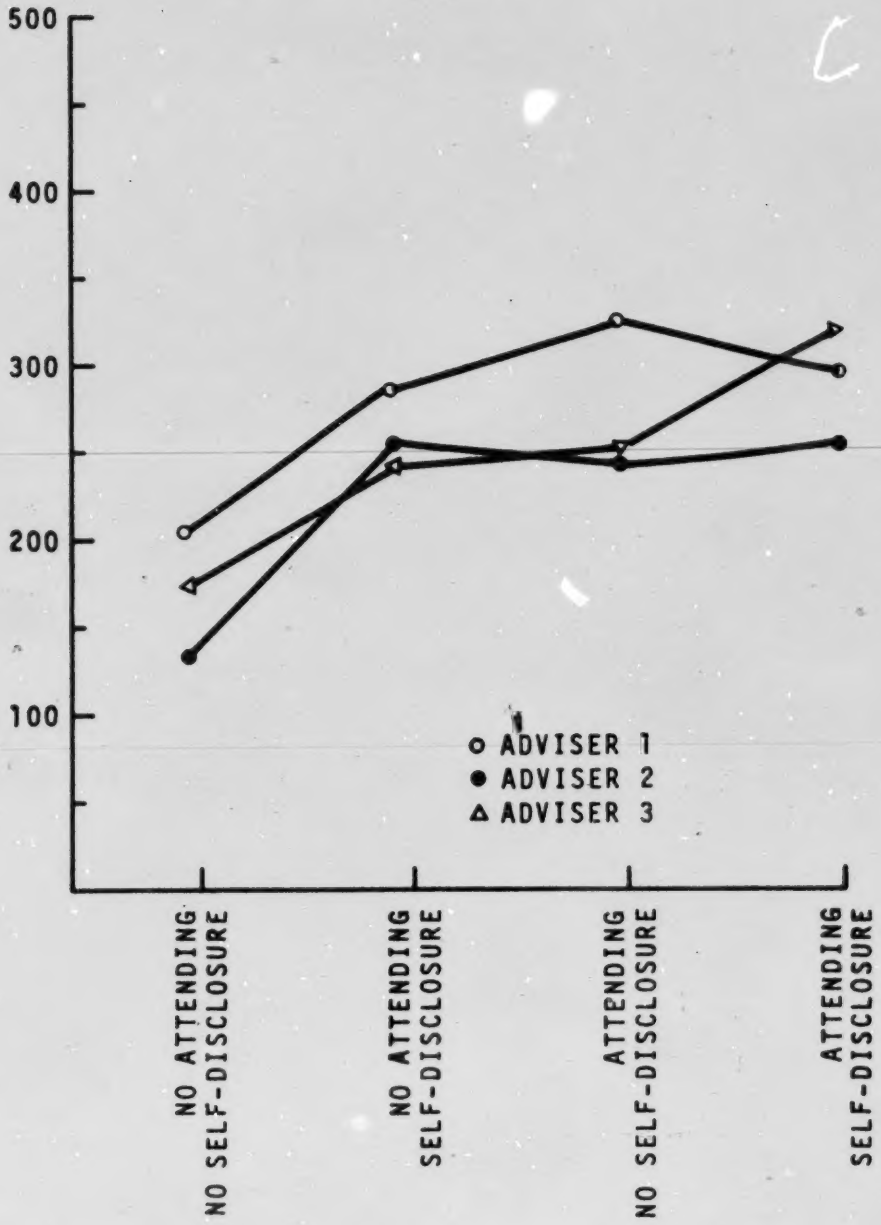

Figure 28. Plotted means: Deep/shallow

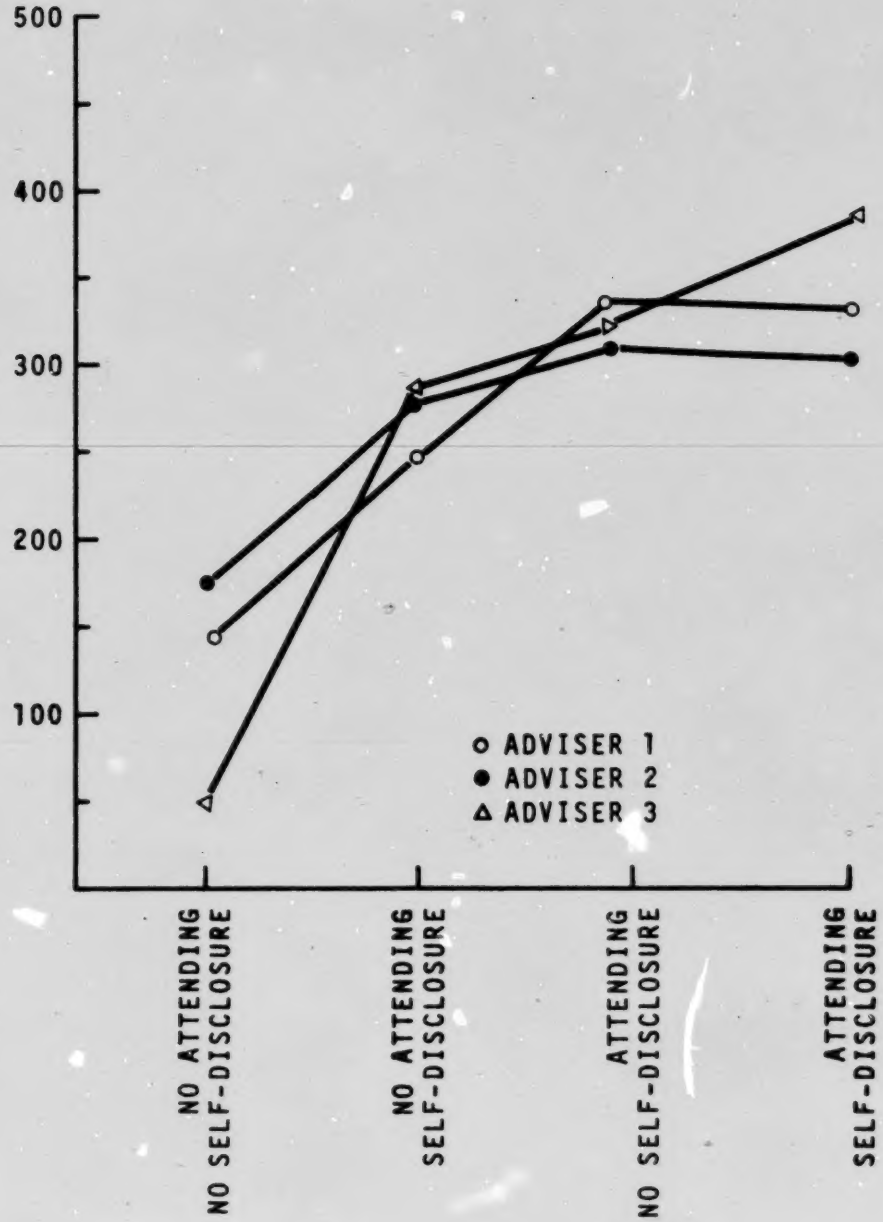

Figure 29. Plotted means: Sympathetic/unsympathetic

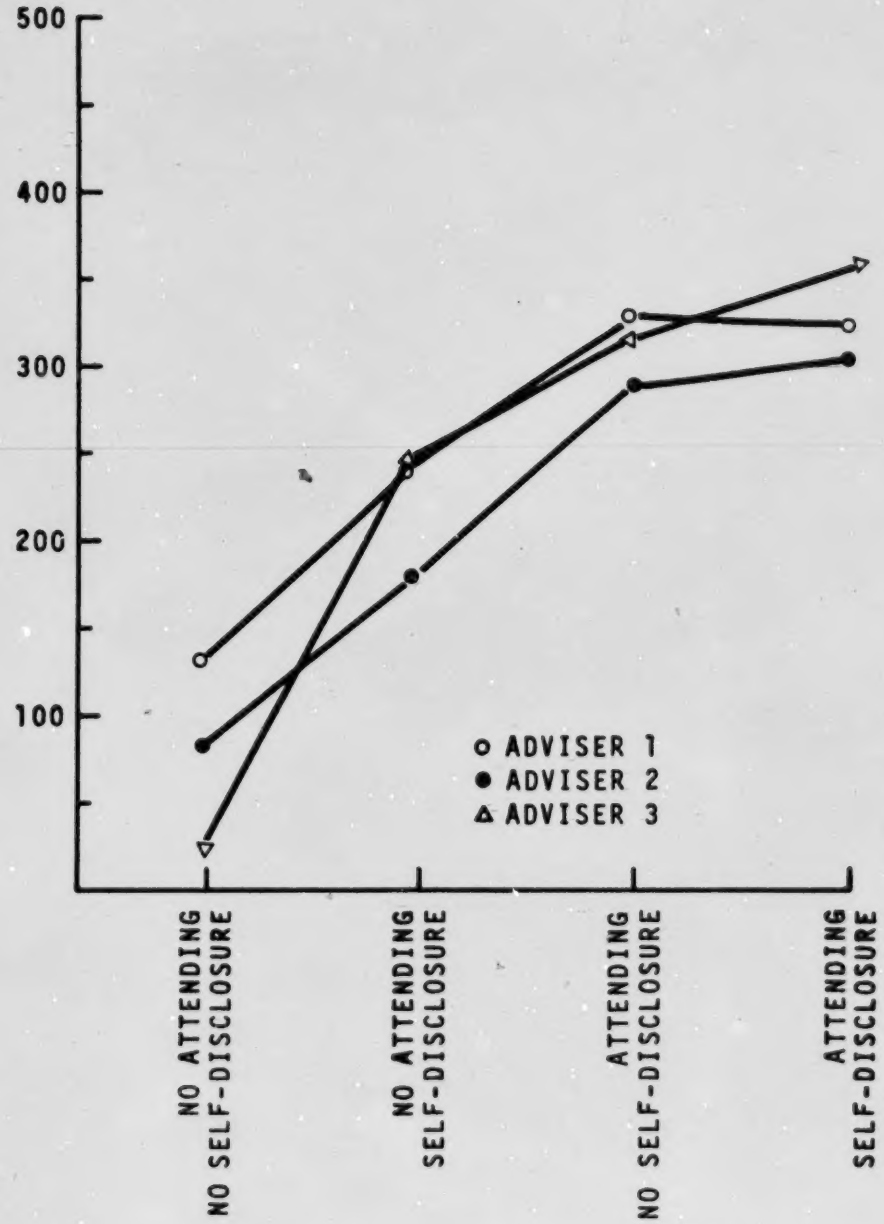

Figure 30. Plotted means: Close/distant

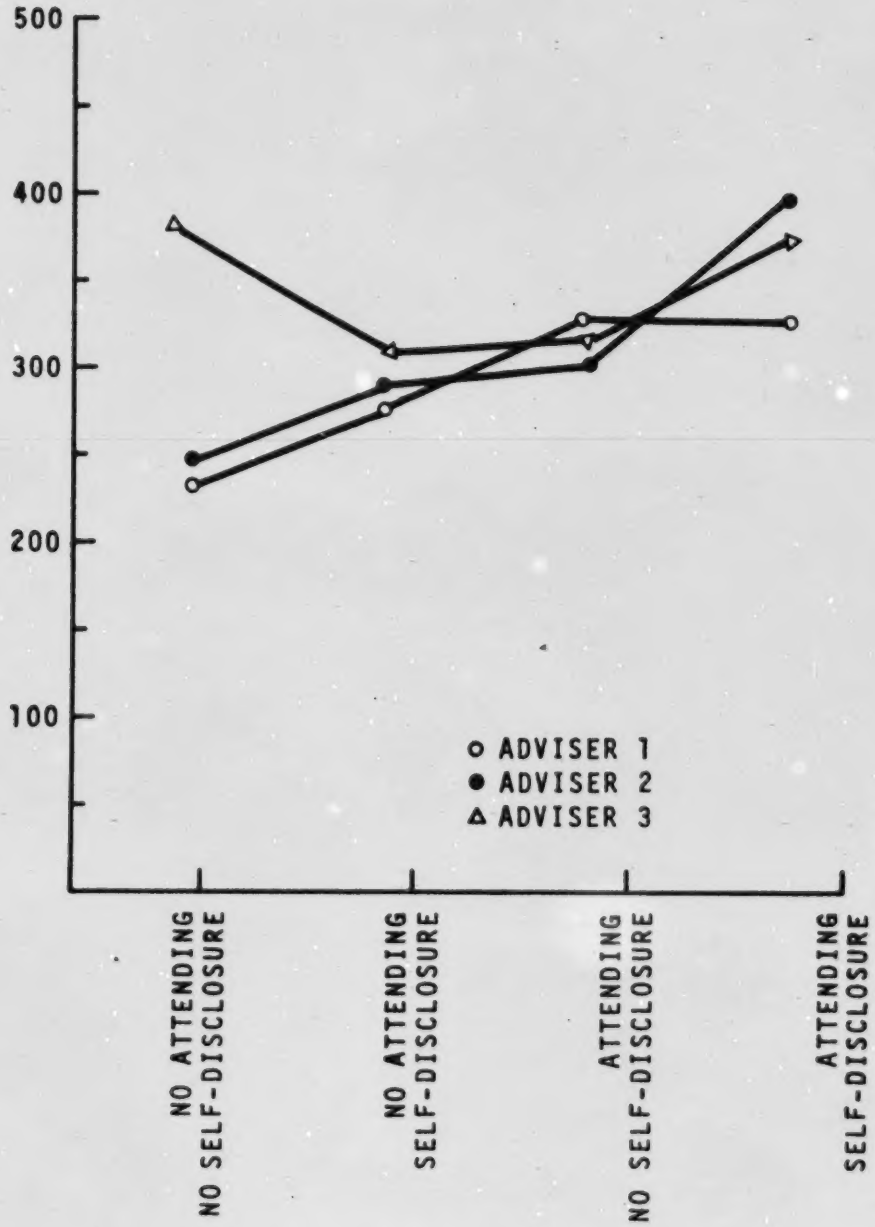

Figure 31. Plotted means: Decisive/indecisive

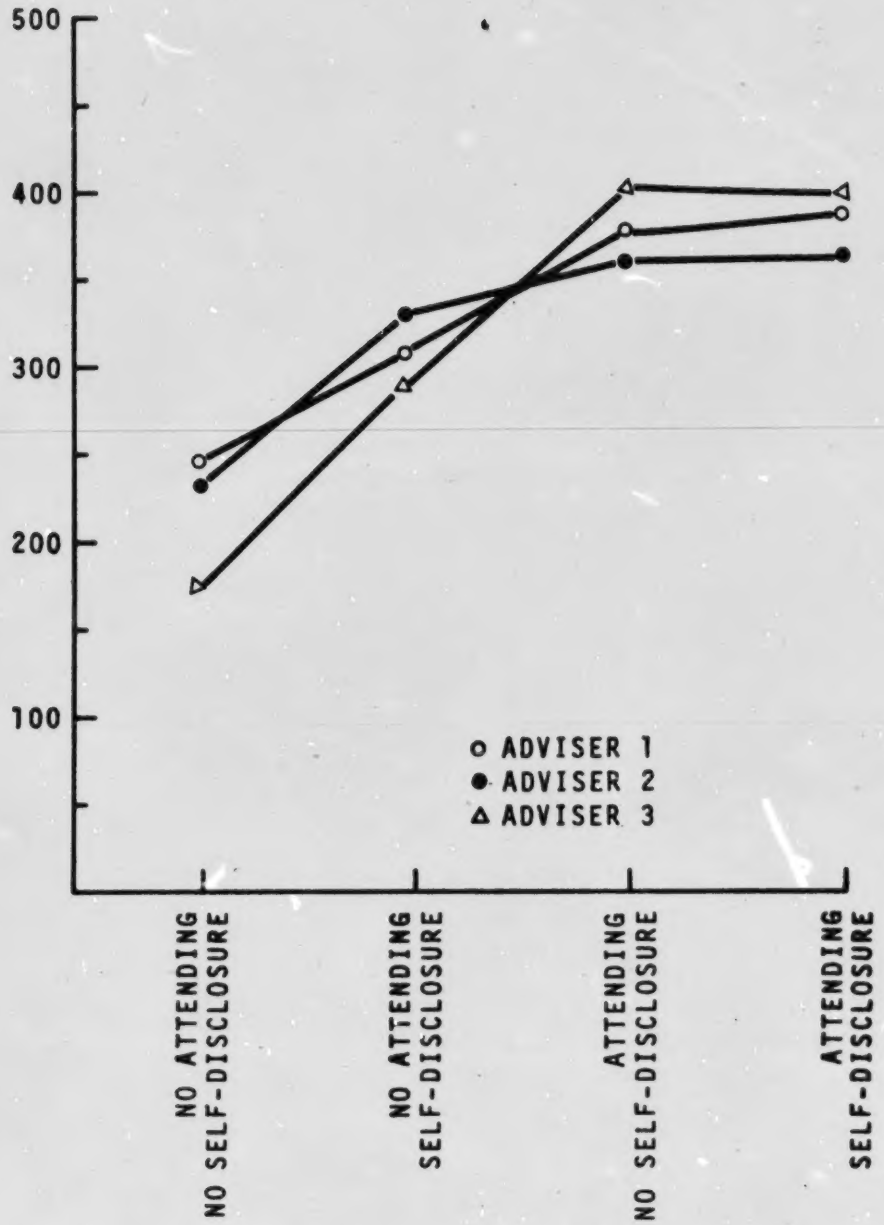

Figure 32. Plotted means: Pleasant/irritable

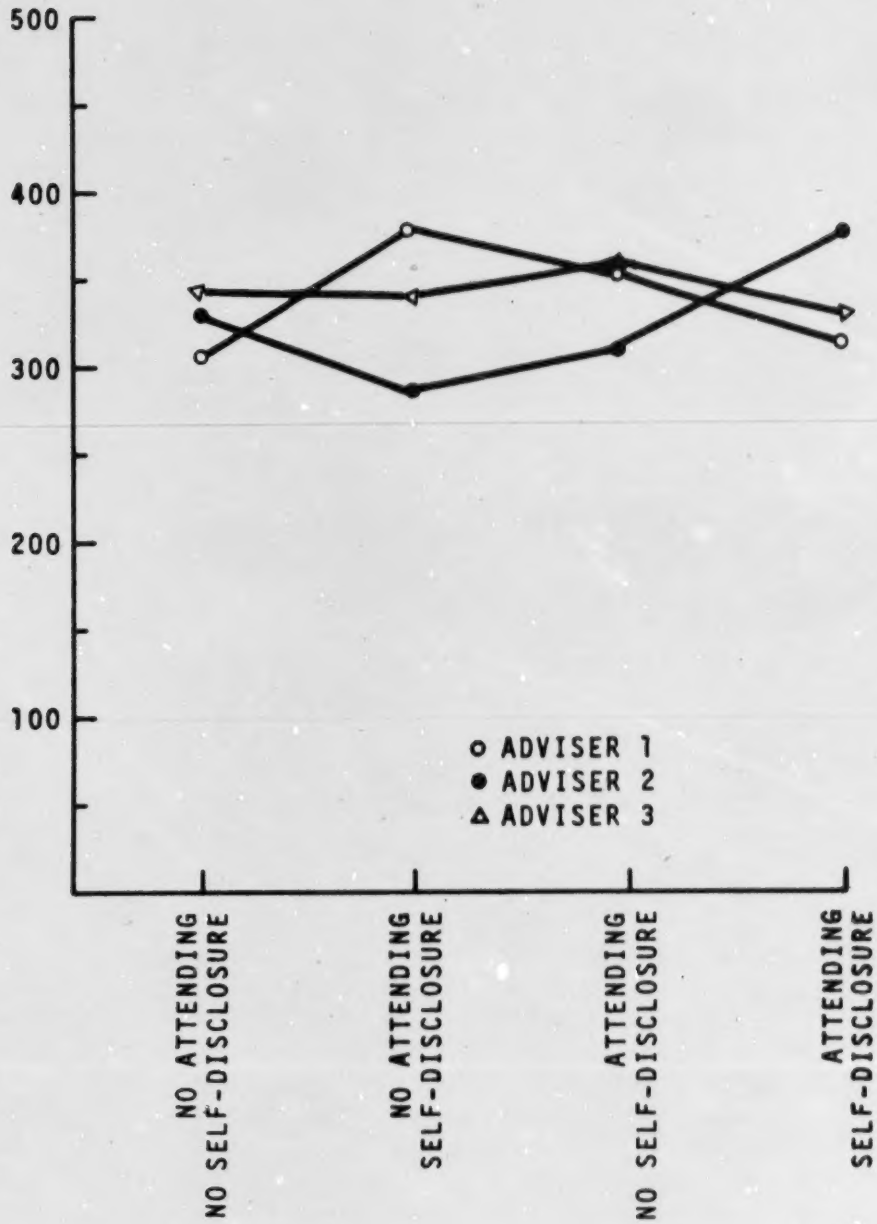

Figure 33. Plotted means: Stable/erratic

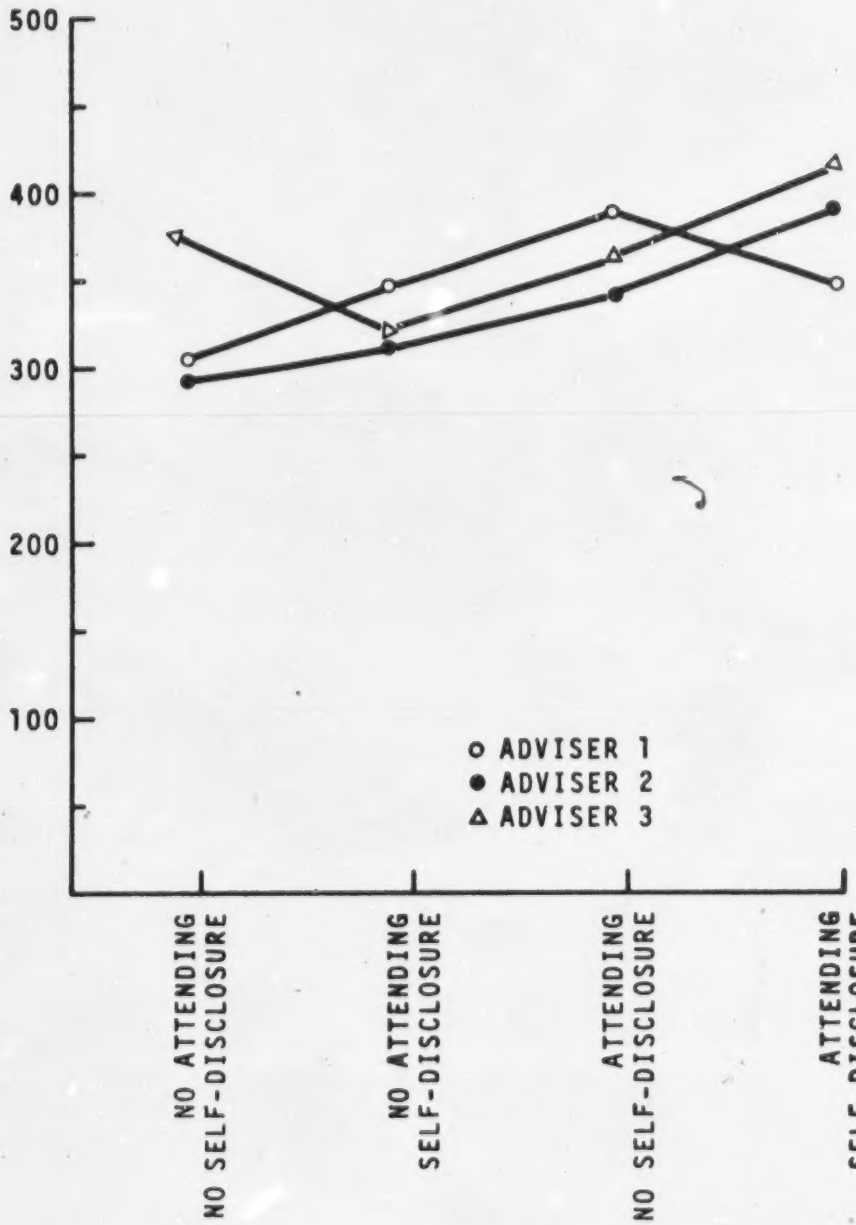

Figure 34. Plotted means: Consistent/inconsistent